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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5664th meeting of the Security Council, held on 17 April 2007, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls all its previous resolutions on Lebanon, in particular resolutions 1701 (2006), 425 and 426 (1978), 520 (1982), 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), as well as the statements of its president on the situation in Lebanon, in particular its statement of 12 December 2006 (S/PRST/2006/52).

"The Security Council reiterates its full support for the legitimate and democratically-elected Government of Lebanon, calls for full respect of the democratic institutions of the country, in conformity with its constitution, and condemns any effort to destabilize Lebanon. The Security Council calls upon all Lebanese political parties to show responsibility with a view to preventing, through dialogue, further deterioration of the situation in Lebanon. It reaffirms its strong support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders and under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon.

"The Security Council welcomes the report of the Secretary-General of 14 March 2007 (S/2007/147) on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). It notes with appreciation the indication by the Secretary-General that further progress has been made towards the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). It reiterates its attachment to the full implementation of all provisions of this resolution and urges all concerned parties to cooperate fully with the Security Council and the Secretary-General to achieve a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution as envisioned in the resolution.

"The Security Council welcomes the completion of the second phase of the deployment of UNIFIL, expresses its strong appreciation to Member States that contribute to UNIFIL and commends the active role of the force, notably of its Commander, as well as of the Special Coordinator of the United Nations for Lebanon.

"The Security Council, taking note of the Secretary-General's observation that more can be done to consolidate the cessation of hostilities, urges the Israeli and Lebanese Governments to approve the temporary security

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arrangements for the northern part of the village of Ghajar and to further close liaison and coordination arrangements with UNIFIL, notably through tripartite meetings. It also encourages the parties to cooperate with UNIFIL to visibly mark the Blue Line, notably in sensitive areas in order to prevent inadvertent violations.

"The Security Council welcomes the measures taken by the Government of Lebanon, with the assistance of UNIFIL, to establish between the Blue Line and the Litani river an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL, and encourages the Government of Lebanon to strengthen its efforts to this end.

"The Security Council reiterates its deep concern at the continuing Israeli violations of Lebanese air space, appeals to all parties concerned to respect the cessation of hostilities and the Blue Line in its entirety, to refrain from any act of provocation, and to abide scrupulously by their obligation to respect the safety of the UNIFIL and other United Nations personnel, including by avoiding any course of action which endangers United Nations personnel and by ensuring UNIFIL is accorded full freedom of movement throughout its area of operation.

"The Security Council, in this context, expresses its serious concern at mounting information by Israel and another State of illegal movements of arms across the Lebanese-Syrian border in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). It welcomes the determination expressed and the measures taken by the Government of Lebanon to prevent such movements in conformity with relevant resolutions, notes that the Government of Syria has stated that it has taken measures and reiterates its call on that Government to take further measures to reinforce controls at the border.

"The Security Council, taking note of the letter of the Secretary-General to the president of the Council of 13 April 2007 (S/2007/207), welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to evaluate the situation along the entire border and invites him to dispatch at the earliest, in close liaison with the Lebanese Government, an independent mission to fully assess the monitoring of the border and to keep the Council informed on his contacts with the Lebanese Government, and to report back to the Council, before his next report, on its findings and recommendations in this regard. The Security Council urges all parties to cooperate fully with this mission.

"The Council urges again all Member States, in particular in the region, to take all necessary measures to implement in full paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006) to enforce the arms embargo, and expresses its intention, upon reception of the Secretary-General's recommendations, to take further concrete steps to achieve the goals set out in this paragraph.

"The Council welcomes any request by the Government of Lebanon for assistance to enhance Lebanon's border security capacities, including by supplying equipment and training. It welcomes in this regard the on-going assistance provided by the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Arab Emirates and others, and encourages Member States, as suggested by the Secretary-General, to consider further assistance.

"The Council, while commending the steps taken by the Government of Lebanon to exercise its monopoly of the use of force throughout its territory, takes note with concern of reported activities of unauthorized armed elements outside of UNIFIL's area of operations and reiterates its call for disbanding and disarmament of all militias and armed groups in Lebanon. It expresses its deep concern at the report of recent statements made in this regard by the Hizbullah Secretary General, notably with regard to the seizure by the Lebanese authorities of a truckload of arms on 8 February 2007, and underscores that these statements are an open admission of activities which would constitute a violation of resolution 1701 (2006). It expresses concern at any allegation of rearming of Lebanese and non Lebanese armed groups and militias and reiterates that there should be no sale or supply of arms and related materiel to Lebanon except as authorized by its Government.

"The Security Council expresses deepest worry at the presence in very high numbers of unexploded ordnance in south Lebanon, including cluster munitions. It deplores the death and injury of dozens of civilians, as well as of several de-miners, caused by those munitions since the cessation of hostilities. It supports in this context the Secretary-General's request to Israel to provide to the United Nations detailed data on its use of cluster munitions in southern Lebanon.

"The Security Council notes with profound concern that there has been no progress on the issue of the return of the two Israeli soldiers abducted by Hizbullah on 12 July 2006 despite further intense efforts by the Secretary-General and his facilitator, and reiterates its call for their immediate and unconditional release.

"The Security Council further encourages efforts aimed at urgently settling the issue of the Lebanese prisoners detained in Israel.

"The Security Council commends the efforts of the Secretary-General and his facilitator towards an early resolution of those issues and reiterates its call upon all parties concerned to fully cooperate with the Secretary-General to this end.

"Bearing in mind the relevant provisions of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006), in particular paragraph 10 of resolution 1701, on the delineation of the Syrian-Lebanese border, the Security Council notes in this context the progress recently made by the senior cartographer appointed by the Secretary-General in reviewing relevant material and developing an accurate territorial definition of the Sheba'a Farms area. Noting the Secretary-General's expectation that the technical work will be completed by mid-June and his intention to report more fully at that time, the Security Council invites all parties to cooperate with the cartographer by providing any relevant material in their possession.

"The Security Council also reiterates its appreciation for the process launched by the Secretary-General to investigate the implications of the interim proposal contained in the seven-point plan of the Government of Lebanon regarding the Sheba'a farms area. It looks forward to the early completion of this task in liaison with relevant parties and to further recommendations by the Secretary-General on this key issue.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support to the Secretary-General in his efforts and dedication to facilitate and assist in the fulfilment of all provisions of resolution 1701 (2006).

"The Security Council stresses the importance of, and the need to achieve, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all its relevant resolutions including its resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973."